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### **Funds sought for program that pursues court costs, deadbeat payments**

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**The Grand Rapids Press**

KENT COUNTY -- Circuit Court officials are trying to get \$46,200 to continue a pilot program begun last year to hold accountable those owing restitution or court costs.

Chief Circuit Judge Paul Sullivan said officials began the program last fall with six delinquent cases where special hearings were held that cost the county about \$13,200 and garnered more than \$76,000 in past due judgments.

Officials began with more recent cases from 2006 in which delinquencies were at least 90 days past due, court finance manager Paula Taylor told the county's Finance and Physical Resources Committee on Tuesday.

The committee recommended the full county board approve the added funds when it meets May 22.

In the past, court officials have dealt with delinquencies through probation hearings and more typical collection efforts, such as writing letters and issuing notices to those behind on their obligations to taxpayers.

Under the new program, those with delinquencies are ordered to court for special hearings presided over by a visiting judge.

Sullivan said, while all judges are free to enforce their orders, the new program impresses upon individuals the seriousness of fulfilling court orders and provides more consistent policies among the county's 13 judges.